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CRUISE REPORT

F.R.S. "M A R A"

30th September-30th October, 1959.

Objectives:

1. To compare the overall selectivity of the wing trawl and the otter trawl.
2. To use the trawl-net camera.

The cruise began at Mallaig as planned, but owing to the local scarcity of fish, and after consultation with the laboratory, it was decided to return to the east coast.

The intention then was to work the Buchan Deep or off the Cruden Buoy, but owing to severe south-easterly weather the shelter of the Moray Firth presented the only possibility. Even so on only three days of the first fortnight was the weather considered good enough for trawling and no fish stocks suitable for comparative fishing were found. The third week, when Mr. Priestley was available, was directed to camera work in the Moray Firth. On the Tuesday and Wednesday of that week the camera was run on both the Otter trawl and the Wing trawl. In all hauls it was attached close to the headline, looking only very slightly forward. From this position interesting sequences were obtained which showed clearly the nature of the sea-bed, epifauna, and several species of fish: also, on one occasion the type of bottom liable to hold and break fishing gear, as it did at that time, only freeing itself after breaking one sweep wire.

During the second haul of the third day the net came fast on a wreck and had to be cut adrift. Fortunately this happened during a shallow water drag which enabled frogmen from the laboratory to salvage the net and camera intact the following day. In all, 250 negatives were obtained of which the more interesting have been printed.

Comparative fishing was resumed from the 20th to the 23rd off the Cruden Buoy, but the weather deteriorated again and the cruise was abandoned on the 27th as no improvement in the weather seemed likely.

M. J. D. MOWAT
8th January, 1960.